



California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

News Release

Docket #: A02-05-065

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PUC APPROVES UPGRADE OF RICHMOND CROSSING, WIGWAGS MAY BE ALLOWED TO STAY

SAN FRANCISCO, September 4, 2003 -- The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) today authorized Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Company (BNSF) to install warning devices at its Richmond Avenue crossing and denied the request of the City of Richmond to prevent the removal of the wigwag warning devices. However, the Commission left open the possibility that both the new warning devices and the wigwags could coexist as long as safety is not compromised.

The crossing is located in the Point Richmond area of the City. It is an at-grade crossing at the edge of a rail yard owned and used by BNSF. The tracks cross East Richmond Avenue at the intersection of Richmond Avenue and West Cutting Boulevard. Near the crossing, West Cutting Boulevard intersects South Garrard Boulevard. Nearby on the other side of the crossing, Railroad Avenue intersects Richmond Avenue.

The City of Richmond filed an application with the PUC on May 31, 2002, seeking to either preserve the wigwags as the only operative warning system at the crossing, or to stop the work begun by BNSF in January 2002 to replace the wigwag warning system at the crossing with cantilevered flashing light signals with gates.

The Commission determined that the wigwags will not provide the sufficient warning to motorists or pedestrians. BNSF's proposed installation of automatic gates and constant warning circuitry will upgrade the crossing to current acceptable safety standards set by the California Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and the Commission.

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